DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 060 EA 025 645

AUTHOR Kaufer, Steve
TITLE 99 Tips for Safe Schools.
INSTITUTION Inter/Action Associates, Inc., Palm Springs, CA.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 9p.
AVAILABLE FROM Inter/Action Associates, P.O. Box 1566A, Palm Springs, CA 92263.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Alarm Systems; *Crime Prevention; Elementary Secondary Education; Juvenile Gangs; *School Safety; *School Security; Social Control; Technology; Violence

ABSTRACT

This pamphlet highlights 99 tips for maintaining safe schools. Areas of interest include: alarm systems and control of access, vandalism, parent education, transportation, school design, personnel training, and graffiti. The majority of the pointers deal with maintaining and implementing various forms of electronic surveillance and strategies for insuring student safety. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Raufer

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED 367 060

99 Tips for SAFE Schools

EA025645

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1. Determine your security requirements by deciding what you need to protect most of all. If you have a limited budget, start out with basic alarm protection covering high exposure areas, such as computer labs, music rooms and administration areas.

2. To plan your security, form a panel of school personnel at all levels: district security officials, facilities personnel, financial and fiscal managers, maintenance and operations, school administrators, teachers and high level district officials. Including an outside expert could provide a fresh approach and unbiased advice.

3. Consider tying your security system into other systems. For example, integrate energy management with your security system as a more cost effective way to handle both. What you save in energy costs could pay for your security and energy management systems.

4. When selecting electronic security hardware, use equipment that can be economically upgraded as your school district grows. Avoid hardware that can easily become outmoded.

5. In areas where access control is critical, use television cameras to monitor entrances, coupled with electric locks that can be remotely open by an administrative employee.

6. Use photo ID cards to identify who is a student and who isn't. Make it mandatory for students to carry their cards at all times.

7. When using alarm sensors on perimeter doors, mount them so they are unexposed. While door sensors are the first line of defense in any security system, they are also the most abused.

8. Use motion detectors to protect the school's interior. The two most commonly used are passive infrared detectors, which detect body heat; and the dual technology detector, which combines passive infrared with microwave. The dual sensor reduces the potential for false alarms.

9. Focus on the source and reason for weapons found on campus; metal detectors, if considered, should only be one part of a weapons and violence reduction program. Metal detectors alone cannot eliminate guns and knives from campuses.

10. A chalkboard in the restrooms might save the walls from graffiti. Clean it daily and don't take the writings personally.

11. Use a digital communicator in your control panel to transmit alarm signals. It uses existing telephone lines, eliminating an ongoing fee for a communications link. And the telephone network is extremely reliable.

12. Key control is critical. Develop a restrictive, yet workable program and firmly adhere to it.

13. Consider having district security personnel or a contract guard agency respond to alarms before the police are called. It will help reduce false alarm fines. Moreover, the responding personnel will know the campus layout better than police.

14. Give training on alarm system operation to all school personnel authorized to have access to the campus after hours. That way, false alarms will be less frequent and won't undermine the credibility of your security system.

15. Provide wallet-sized instruction cards on operating the security equipment to all authorized staff, because it may be months between training and needing to operate the system. Do not have the district logo or any identifying marks on the instructions.

16. Educate parents and the community that the security programs in place at your school or district are planned, organized and effective. Don't wait until an incident occurs and then attempt to defend your preparation.

17. When designing alarm systems, each classroom or other separate area should report to the monitoring center individually. This will speed response and pinpoint the source of false alarms.

18. Adopt a lights out program to both reduce after-hours theft and gain energy cost savings. Thieves and taggers can't work in the dark. And if lights are seen on campus when it should be dark, informed residents living nearby can call police.

19. Deter future graffiti by immediately painting over it. That sends a message to gangs and taggers that they won't be tolerated.

20. Develop a reward program that pays cash for tips on weapons or the perpetrators of campus crime. Use a tip line and give callers a code number to help them claim cash for the information they give.

21. Before removing graffiti, photograph it and keep all photographs on file. Once you tie a certain type of graffiti to a certain gang you will know who is operating in your district and who is new to your district.

22. Develop a program of charging students and their parents for the cost of removing graffiti.

23. Secure high-value security equipment with anchor kits. Some use fiber optic detection systems that sense whether the equipment is being disconnected or moved, triggering an alarm. Others simply anchor the equipment to work tables or carts. The devices discourage casual theft and slow down burglaries.

24. Install video cameras on buses to record student's actions. Install the cameras in housings that make it impossible to tell if a camera is recording or not.

25. Bullying can escalate into dangerous behavior, injury or death. Establish and maintain a hard line on physical or psychological bullying and torment.

26. Establish a vandalism account at each school. The money will go to pay for repairs necessitated by vandalism during the school year. Any money left over at the end of the year can be spent on student equipment or activities, as an incentive to ward off vandalism. Promoting this program with students enlists them as allies against vandalism.

27. Consider security issues in the design of your school. Look for, and eliminate, building features that provide access to the roof or upper stories. These include half walls, fences attached to the building and fixtures or other construction elements that provide hand or foot holds.

28. Use fences and landscaping to define campus borders. Avoid landscaping that obscures observation from outside the campus. Maintain trees so they cannot be used to gain access to the roof or upper level rooms.

29. Place parking lots where they can be observed. Design them for safe flow, with one exit and entrance.

30. Student spaces should offer a sense of ownership. Likewise, avoid areas that have no ownership. Assign monitors to hallways and give them responsibility for those areas. A sense of ownership will follow.

31. Remove exterior locks and handles on doors that are not required to be opened from the outside.

32. Replace bathroom doors with zig zag entrances to monitor activities and audible sounds. A roll-down door can secure the bathroom after hours.

33. Listen for potential trouble in the restroom via an audio sensing alarm. These "scream alarms" are activated only when a certain threshold of sound is reached.

34. Allow entry to the school through one main door only. Keep all others locked to outside entry. This allows visitor monitoring and enforcement of the visitor policy.

35. T-bar type ceilings with a height that is reasonably accessible are prime targets for hiding weapons and drugs.

36. Consider removing student lockers if experience at the site has demonstrated they are being used to store drugs, weapons or other contraband.

37. Conceal a closed circuit television camera in problem areas. Small portable units are available that can be hidden in working clocks, false smoke detectors, potted plants and other items. Some cameras transmit short distances via radio signal.

38. Include security issues in your public relations program to promote community awareness and participation. When your district needs funding for safety and security, parents can be your best allies with such a program in place.

39. While most school districts don't allow students to carry pagers, they may have a legitimate need. So modify the policy to allow them with a permit. The permit process should include parental or guardian permission.

40. Consider the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act when designing fire alarms, mounting locks or other security hardware.

41. As a part of security awareness, encourage parents to inform school officials of domestic changes to guard against parental abductions.

42. A second lunch period can reduce the potential for problems by reducing the number of students gathering and interacting. However, guard against students cutting classes by taking two lunches.

43. Communications during a fight or crisis situation is critical. Equip onsite administrators with two-way radios. Multi-channel radios are best because they allow communications with the site office, district office and security personnel.

44. Use a contract guard agency to supplement the district security force, particularly for special events. However, the quality of personnel, training, supervision and pre-employment background investigation vary from company to company. Set tight bidding specifications and screen prospective companies carefully. Don't choose one solely on price.

45. Convex mirrors are a low-tech solution to blind spots in hallways. Long used in retail stores, the unbreakable mirrors help staff observe potential trouble spots.

46. Train faculty and staff on how to defuse potentially violent situations non-violently. If in-house expertise is not available, commercially available programs are an economical option.

47. Develop a district-wide crisis response program that can be customized for each campus. Include training for students and staff. Such a program reduces the opportunity for injury.

48. Keep an accurate inventory of high-value, portable equipment to aid recovery if the items are stolen. Constantly update the inventory by recording new purchases, transfers and scrapped equipment.

49. Since studies show that 86 percent of guns that wind up at school come from home, educating parents goes a long way to reduce guns at school.

50. Properly post campus entrances with the applicable sections of your state's education code regarding visitor policy and trespassing statutes.

51. Develop a "safe corridor" program in your community between school and home. Include a system for helping students and staff going to and from school.

52. Develop a system to track disciplinary and criminal action so the district can monitor occurrences, spot trends, measure the effectiveness of existing programs and deploy personnel and resources effectively. Use a simple manual or automated incident reporting system.

53. Walk, don't run, when responding to a fight. Walking allows you to visually analyze the situation and develop a response strategy, and to seek assistance along the way.

54. Use automatic telephone dialers, such as those used by telemarketers, to report absences. Districts using these devices report increased attendance. Follow up with an appropriate method of handling truants.

55. Distribute to staff, students and parents written codes of conduct, discipline procedures and student rights and responsibilities. Students and parents should know the sanctions for violating rules.

56. Use on-site suspension for problem students as an alternative to suspension. Place students in a special classroom and exclude them from participation in regular classes and extra-curricular activities. The district continues to receive daily attendance credit and students who lack daytime supervision are monitored.

57. Establish a clear distinction between discipline issues and criminal infractions. Put in place and publicize policies and procedures to report all criminal behavior to law enforcement agencies.

58. Report to the school board on a regular basis on school crime and safety-related issues. Keep the board informed and a partner in the security process.

59. Have the school board proclaim a safe schools week. National Safe School Week is observed annually during the third week in October. Use this week to involve and educate the students and community to generate positive public relations.

60. Act on rumors. When you hear of a criminal or unsafe incident rumored to occur, immediately warn students that may become involved of the consequences of improper behavior.

61. One of the most visible aspects of a safe school environment is the manner in which the school is secured, landscaped and maintained. These factors make an immediate impression on students, visitors and parents. The four principal concerns are: (a) securing the campus perimeter; (b) maintaining hazard-free grounds; (c) minimizing vandalism; and (d) creating a safe and inviting appearance.

62. Fully understand existing conditions at the school and the surrounding community to plan a more effective security and safety program. Gather both qualitative and quantitative data to develop an accurate view.

63. Include "hard looks" and threats in the disciplinary code as acts with the potential to cause violence and disruption; therefore subject to discipline.

64. In group conflicts, taking the leader to the principal's office could turn him into a martyr and increase his power. Rather, select a member of the group to punish as an example. That will lessen the leader's strength and confuse the group.

65. Keep staff informed of potential conflicts and problems on campus. Being informed allows the staff to gain information during student conversations that may help to prevent occurrences.

66. Longer passing periods increases the opportunity for disruption. Consider shortening the periods, moving the students to class more quickly, reducing the potential for negative interaction.

67. Involve parents in school security programs. Adult visibility serves as a deterrent to crime and violence. Parent volunteers increase the reach of the district security force and develops allies in the community.

68. An increase in the amount of graffiti, especially the crossing out of neighborhood gang tags, is a clear indicator of potential gang activity.

69. When a group of students who do not normally attend an activity, such as a sporting event, attend the event, it could signal impending trouble. Increased awareness and security are needed.

70. Accounting procedures and controls should be in place and practiced for student organizations. Losses caused by poor practices aren't typically large, but are embarrassing.

71. A computerized system utilizing bar coded labels attached to fire extinguishers and other critical equipment tracks the equipment and its maintenance schedule. A similar system can monitor guards on patrol.

72. Consider language on the parking permit application consenting to future searches of the vehicle. Clear this with your district legal counsel. Some districts use this practice to eliminate the need to obtain permission to search when needed.

73. Training is critical for security personnel. Document all training; it will assist in your defense in the event of civil litigation.

74. A voice mail system can assist in disseminating information on security issues to all schools in the district. A "Security Hotline" provides a single point of contact for information on incidents and problems.

75. Involve security personnel in planning special events, including athletic contests, to ensure that the proper crowd control and security precautions are planned and in place.

76. Properly planned security programs can prevent conflicts and eliminate many of the factors that lead to violence and other disruptive and unwanted behavior.

77. Use bullet drills to teach students how to properly act if shots are fired on campus. These are much like fire or earthquake drills, except students are taught how to react when the "bullet" alarm is sounded.

78. Provide a location to connect a small mobile home and provide the utilities for a live-in police officer. In exchange for a place to call home, the police officer agrees to check the school campus during off-hours and respond to alarms.

79. Set up a Peer Assistance Center to give students a place to discuss fears, threats and other emotions that affect school security. This gives students a place to work through problems in a non-violent manner.

80. Schools are taking an increasingly aggressive approach in dealing with the threat of gang violence. Banning gang insignias, clothing, jewelry or other symbols is common across the country and has a proven impact on reducing the potential for violence.

81. Reconstruction projects provide the opportunity to change architectural elements that don't contribute to safety or that present an opportunity for unwanted behavior. Have your site committee work with the architect and security experts to design the improvements.

82. Establish a good public relations program to report the good things that happen at school to encourage community support. You must counter the press, which will continue to report the bad things that happen.

83. Tips from students have consistently proven to be among the top strategies in weapons reduction. Create a mechanism for students to provide this information anonymously.

84. Maintain a separate clipping file of news stories about your district or neighboring districts concerning security issues. This will enable you to support future requests for funding to increase or enhance district security.

85. Develop an adopt-a-school program with police officers. The officers may regularly visit school campuses, eat lunch with students

and get to know the campus. Their presence provides an effective deterrent.

86. Make certain security positions are staffed according to a written schedule. Failing to have the prescribed number of security personnel on duty is a common element in civil litigation following an incident.

87. While the Federal Gun-Free School Zone Act was judged unconstitutional, encourage your state legislature to enact a law that increases sentences for possession of a gun within a defined area around campuses.

88. Help maintain order on buses by assigning seats. If children misbehave, change their seating arrangement.

89. Use and promote a high-tech labeling system called Microdots to protect school computer and audio visual equipment. These minute labels are hidden inside the machines and contain information that can positively identify the equipment as school property, even if serial numbers or other identifiers are removed. Promoting their use is a deterrent to theft.

90. Use an electromagnetic lock with a time delay on emergency exit doors with direct outside access from rooms or buildings where high value items are kept. It causes a delay of 15 to 30 seconds from the time an exit is attempted. During that interval an alarm sounds and a closed circuit television camera can be automatically switched on. The delay also gives security personnel a head start on responding before the door unlocks.

91. Frequently change people assigned to watch closed circuit television monitors to avoid EGO or Eyes GlazeOver. EGO occurs in some people when they watch the same scene over and over.

92. Provide visitors to school campuses, including new substitute teachers, with identification badges. Anyone unfamiliar to school personnel without a badge should be subject to being stopped and questioned.

93. Include effective two-way communication between teachers and the office in your security program. Teachers should be able to contact the office or security from their classroom. Supply physical education teachers and administrators who roam the campus with two-way radios.

94. Control invitation lists and check identifications at school dances to keep them peaceful. When using written invitations, make sure students have them to get into the dance, or at least have their school identification.

95. Offer self defense classes to school employees, including custodians who work at night.

96. Have students who leave school early exit through the office after checking out. Maintain a list of custodial agreements to make certain the proper parent picks up the child.

97. Encourage the use of block safety watch programs at bus stops. Residents, inturn, agree to watch the bus stop in their neighborhood and to alert police should violence occur. Publicize the program as a deterrent.

98. To provide a level of protection to teachers on campus after hours, some districts provide small "panic" transmitters that send a signal for help via a radio signal. These devices connected to the existing alarm system allow teachers to summon emergency help.

99. Portable alarm systems can be deployed temporarily, as needed, to areas burglars and vandals are hitting. These temporary systems can be used in response to previous incidents or tips of a threatened burglary or act of vandalism.

INTER/ACTION
ASSOCIATES
P.O. Box 1566, Palm Springs, CA 92263
(619) 322-9097

© Copyright 1984 **Inter/Action Associates.** *All Rights Reserved.*

While not meant as the definitive answer to the numerous and complex security issues facing education today, many schools and school districts have proven that the ideas in this publication work. Simple and cost-effective, most of programs and procedures outlined in 99 Tips for SAFE Schools can be implemented immediately, with little capital expenditure.

Now in its fourth printing, we are gratified by the response of school administrators, faculty and staff members to 99 Tips for SAFE Schools. Districts across the United States are making their campuses safer and more secure using concepts in this booklet.

Inter/Action Associates is an independent, non-product affiliated security consulting firm. With a depth of experience working with school districts, Inter/Action Associates develops solutions to security problems - solutions that work and are cost-effective. The education and educational facilities environment is changing. As consultants we bring an innovative approach to identify existing and potential security concerns, and provide effective solutions to meet those challenges. Our work with school districts has led to the realization that while the need for security is increasing, often the budgets to provide the protection are shrinking. The approaches to safety and security issues Inter/Action Associates develops are creative and cost-efficient, increasing security and in many instances reducing the cost. Inter/Action Associates does not charge for an initial telephone consultation to determine if our expertise and services are applicable to your needs. Consulting services are available on an hourly or fixed fee project basis. The recommendations provided are unbiased. We accept no fees, commissions or other consideration from any supplier of equipment or services that may be recommended in the course of our consulting engagements. Inter/Action Associates strictly adheres to the Code of Conduct of the International Association of Professional Security Consultants.

About The Author

Since 1974, Steve Kaufer, CPP, has held important management positions in the security industry. In 1989 he formed Inter/Action Associates to provide security consulting services. An acknowledged expert on school security issues, Steve Kaufer has performed security assessments and developed effective programs for districts large and small. He authored the SAFE at School audio cassette program on school security, and numerous articles that have appeared in educational and security trade publications. He is publisher of The SAFE Report, a newsletter addressing school security with a nationwide audience.

He is among a select group of less than 3,300 with the earned designation of Certified Protection Professional (CPP) from the American Society for Industrial Security. Steve Kaufer meets the rigorous educational, professional and ethical standards of the International Association of Professional Security Consultants. He is a member of that group and serves on its board of directors.

INTER/ACTION ASSOCIATES
P.O. Box 1566, Palm Springs, CA 92263

HERE'S THE INFORMATION YOU REQUESTED